



Tornadoes are violent: they can destroy well-made structures, uproot trees and hurl objects through the air like deadly missiles. Although severe tornadoes are most common in the Plains States, they can happen anywhere. Learn what to do to keep your loved one's safe.

Top Tips

- Identify a safe place in your home where household members and pets will gather during a tornado: a basement, storm cellar or an interior room on the lowest floor with no windows.
- In a high-rise building, pick a hallway in the center of the building. You may not have enough time to go to the lowest floor.
- In a mobile home, choose a safe place in a nearby sturdy building. If your mobile home park has a designated shelter, make it your safe place. No mobile home, however it is configured, is safe in a tornado.

Know the difference!



A tornado **WATCH** means a tornado is possible.



A tornado **WARNING** means a tornado is already occurring or will occur soon.

Before

Prepare in Advance

Be sure you're ready. That means:

- Assembling an [emergency preparedness kit](#).
- Creating a [household evacuation plan](#) that includes your pets.
- Staying informed about your community's risk and response plans.
- Educating your family on how to use the [Safe and Well website](#).
- Download the Emergency App for [iPhone >>](#) or for [Android >>](#)

How to Prepare for Tornadoes

Protecting your family

Talk about tornadoes with your family so that everyone knows where to go if a tornado warning is issued. Discussing ahead of time helps reduce fear, especially for younger children.

- Check at your workplace and your children's schools and day care centers to learn about their tornado emergency plans. Every building has different safe places.
- Ensure that every member of your family carries a Safe and Well wallet card.
- Make sure you have access to NOAA radio broadcasts, either through streaming an [online NOAA radio station](#), downloading a NOAA radio app in the Apple Store or Google Play, or purchasing a battery-powered or hand-crank [NOAA radio in the Red Cross Store](#)
- Check [emergency kit](#) and replenish any items missing or in short supply. especially medications or other medical supplies. Keep it nearby.

Protecting your pets & animals

- Prepare a [pet emergency kit](#) for your companion animals.

Protecting your home

Make a list of items to bring inside in the event of a storm.

- Make trees more wind resistant by removing diseased or damaged limbs, then strategically remove branches so that wind can blow through. Strong winds frequently break weak limbs and hurl them at great speed, causing damage or injury when they hit.
- Remove any debris or loose items in your yard. Branches and firewood may become missiles in strong winds.

Consider installing permanent shutters to cover windows. Shutters can be closed quickly and provide the safest protection for windows.

- Strengthen garage doors. Garage doors are often damaged or destroyed by flying debris, allowing strong winds to enter. As winds apply pressure to the walls, the roof can be lifted off, and the rest of the house can easily follow.

Right Before a Tornado

Don't wait until you see the tornado to act! If you do nothing else:

1. Listen to local area radio, NOAA radio or TV stations for the latest information and updates.
2. Move to an underground shelter, basement or safe room. If none is available, a small, windowless interior room or hallway on the lowest level of a sturdy building is the safest alternative.
 - Remember: no area of a mobile home is safe during a tornado. If you have access to a sturdy shelter or a vehicle, go there immediately, using your seat belt if driving.
3. [Find a local emergency shelter](#) and know the best routes to get there if you need to.

Then, if you can, do this:

- Watch for tornado danger signs: dark, often greenish clouds – a phenomenon caused by hail; wall cloud – an isolated lowering of the base of a thunderstorm; cloud of debris.
- Move or secure any of the items on your list of items to bring inside or anything else that can be picked up by the wind.
- Bring your companion animals indoors and maintain direct control of them.

During

If You Are Outdoors

- Seek shelter in a basement, shelter or sturdy building.
- If you cannot quickly walk to a shelter, immediately get into a vehicle and try to drive to the closest sturdy shelter. Remember to buckle your seat belt.
- Stay away from bridge/highway overpasses.
- If strong winds and flying debris occurs while driving, pull over and park, keeping your seat belt on and engine running. Put your head down below the windows, covering your head with your hands and a blanket.

After

If you do nothing else:

1. Let friends and family know you're safe.
2. If evacuated, return only when authorities say it is safe to do so.
3. Continue listening to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio for updated information and instructions.
4. Check for injuries. If you are trained, provide first aid to persons in need until emergency responders arrive.

